

SPEAKING THE ‘DIALOGIC TONGUE’: BAKHTIN AND THE HETEROGLOSSIA OF ‘INDIAN ENGLISH’

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ABSTRACT

When a non-native language intrudes into the territory of the native, linguistic and socio-cultural operations pose certain contextual and extra-linguistic problems. Over a period of time, the intruding language influences the native languages/cultures to create a contestatory condition of disjunction and acclimatization, which may lead to a paradoxical situation: it may continue to be the vehicle of power and hegemony, and at the same time, may help the task of assimilating the voiceless in the discourse of the dominant.¹ The “alien” language may finally get nativized to become a site for a cultural encounter with traces of non-nativity and nativity, cultururation, acculturation and cultural transmission, and hybridization and heterogenization of values and practices. There is no *cul-de-sac* for its operation, as it enters the realm of an inconclusive future.

KEYWORDS: Speaking the ‘Dialogic Tongue’: Bakhtin and the Heteroglossia of ‘Indian English’

INTRODUCTION

This is precisely the case with ‘Indian English’, which not only functions as the second language in India but has also been considered as the “associate official language” of the Republic of India.² In post-independent India, English gained new importance as it functioned as a vehicle for economic reconstruction, planning and development. Different linguistic groups and regions had to have a common language for policy-making, smooth functioning of the democratic network and to interact with international powers. It channelized the nationalistic euphoria and fervour, and served as an instrument to enable India’s presence in the international political and commercial spheres. It also served as a political weapon to check and contain the emergence of Hindi as the common language for official and administrative purposes in India. It certainly became a weapon for the non-Hindi speaking states. Since English is a non-native language it formed a vehicle for a “non-discriminatory treatment” of regions and communities of India. Unlike other native languages, there is no ethnic base for English in India and this was its most important advantage.

The problem of Indian English has been investigated from various perspectives, important among which are socio-linguistic analysis of Braj Kachru and the postmodernist study of Prabod Dasgupta. The present inquiry seeks to investigate Indian English from a Bakhtinian perspective, as a product of dialogization, that is, a process of dialogic confrontation of languages with varied cultural traces. The first part critically investigates the socio-linguistic and postmodernist positions propounded by Braj Kachru and Prabod Dasgupta respectively; and the second section explicates a Bakhtinian possibility of understanding Indian English.

A Critique of the Theories of 'Indian English'

Braj Kachru's sociolinguistic approach in his scholarly book *The Indianization of English* [1983] is certainly a major step towards explaining the complexity of Indian English. Kachru undertakes a study that explores the modification and hybridization of the native variety of English when it is internalized and used by Indians. He examines the process of acculturation in Indian English in a linguistically and culturally pluralistic context of India. According to Kachru, "The Indianization of English language is a consequence of what linguists have traditionally termed *interference* (or transfer)" (1983:1). By "interference", he means the influence of native languages and cultural contexts on Indian English. Indianization, for Kachru, is the nativization of the "guest and friend" as one of our own, of our caste and tradition." (1983: 2).

Kachru's analysis brings to light the impossibility of having a single homogenized Indian English. By highlighting the cultural variations in the Indian usage of English, Kachru negates the existence of the "standard Indian English language". Kachru proceeds to identify the three parameters responsible for such variations, namely, region, ethnic group and proficiency (1983:70). These parameters allow him to locate what he terms as "a *cline of Englishes* in India ranging from *educated Indian English* to varieties such as *Babu English*, *Butler English*, *Bearer English* and *Kitchen English*" (1983:70). He examines the presence of "Indianisms" in the "cline of Englishes" in India and investigates their functional and contextual relevance.³

Kachru's analysis becomes problematic when he attempts to decode rules that underlie the Indian usage. Through a survey of Indian English, he proceeds to present a grammar that would lay out a set of guidelines to determine the Indian collocations and idioms. He seeks to uncover the lexical innovations by locating their cultural contexts and by identifying certain cultural factors. For example, in his study of the educated English in India, Kachru shows the stylistic, systemic, and phrase-level clause structure and interrogative constructions. With the help of an excerpt from Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938), Kachru explains how an Indian English user uses complex noun phrases and verb phrases and long sentences. He is quick to point out the limitations of this usage, "One cannot generalize, since R.K. Narayan's style is the opposite of Raja Rao's. But stylistic characteristics do not have to be uniform: generalizations are indicative of tendencies" (1983 78).

What is missing in this analysis is recognition of the open-ended potential of Indian English that defies rigorous categorization. Though he is aware of the contradictions within a "cline" of Indian English, his attempt to unravel certain tangible norms of usage confines his approach and renders it monologic. Kachru rightly identifies the existence of many "tendencies"; but the point which acquires significance is that these tendencies are so varied that a sociolinguistic profile fails to explain their dialogic oppositions and amalgamations. Kachru's analysis seems to have missed the inconclusive surge of these clines into one another's domains. These tendencies are always in a state of flux, a tension-filled environment, which makes them trespass the boundaries of their articulation.

Another problematic area is Kachru's marginalization of what may be called the "extra-linguisticity" of Indian English. There is an "inner-dialogization" and "double voicedness" in the Indian usage of English which arises due to the co-existence of different value systems. Kachru, in his attempt to demonstrate the "code-switching" and "code-mixing" processes, defocusses these metalinguistic aspects. Further, the notion of "code" which resonates with Jakobsonian implications provides us with a reductionist approach to study the dynamics of Indian English. To quote Bakhtin, "A code is only a technical means of transmitting information; it does not have cognitive, creative significance. A code is a deliberately established, killed context" (1994b 147). We must remember here that context for Bakhtin is a "lived event".

Probal Dasgupta elaborates another important perspective on Indian English. In his book, *The Otherness of English: India's Auntie Tongue Syndrome* [1993] Dasgupta attempts to show the presence of English in India as "Auntie Tongue", which

resonates with the old and unresolved ambivalence about our relationship with life-giving Mother India *vis-à-vis* our technological life-support systems associated with Aunt Victoria (who had been Queen of England and Empress of India) and with her equally prissy and technologically tough-minded successor Uncle Sam (1993 61).

In his views, the meaning of English in India should not be considered as having an "independent referential potential." Rather, it should be analyzed with reference to its meaning in its "native habitat." This leads Dasgupta to argue that since India does not own English, it has to pay "the equivalent of rent to its metropolitan owners". (1993 48).

For Dasgupta, the "otherness" of English acquires crucial importance because it is a constructed otherness by the non-metropolitan communities themselves. In his view, as against the metropolitan "English self", the non-metropolitan communities use an "other-English" which has an "auxiliary status." The non-metropolitan communities sustain this otherness by constructing differentiations that ratify this auxiliary status. As English in India belongs to this non-metropolitan domain, Dasgupta argues that it has an "instrumental" presence. Under the British it was the vehicle of power that facilitated administration, and in the post-independent India, it is a means for achieving personal ends. Hence, Dasgupta argues that "[...] the presence of English in India, for all its superficial quantity, is a purpose bound presence, not a free existence that truly taps the normal range of human-expression" (1993 112).

Later, in his essay titled "Resisting Industriality" (1995) Dasgupta writes, "English is for Indians a *loan language*, not a *turf language*" (1995: 73). That is, English is a borrowed language and is not one of the native languages of India.⁴ But Dasgupta also recognizes the presence of certain "re-turfed Indians" who spend time with English and metropolitan societies. These "re-turfed Indians", according to Dasgupta, form a "culturally sterile" ghetto. The literature written by this ghetto is given the name "Indian English Creative Writing" which, according to him, is a completely dependent writing having nothing specific to do with the realities of Indian situation. It is not an autonomous literature as it functions merely as a subtext to the existing English literary discourses.

As against this, Dasgupta also recognizes what he calls "instrumental use of English" by Indians. By instrumental use he means the use of English "from politics through advaita and scientific contributions" by people like M.K. Gandhi, Dadabhai Naoroji, M.N. Roy, C. Dutt etc who used English as a loan language to achieve certain instrumental ends (1995: 74). They utilized English as a language with a *telos*, and therefore, their use cannot be categorized as belonging to a "culturally sterile" ghetto. In Dasgupta's view, translations from Indian turf languages can serve as "original" creative writing in English since translations into English underscore this instrumental use.

The use of English mainly for business, jobs and commercial ends leads Dasgupta to emphasize the role played by "industriality" in post-independent India. Industriality has given rise to a situation which he terms as "lumpenism" (1995: 76). In his words, in the Indian situation, "managerial industriality becomes a way of life which inherits, and rather brutally reaffirms, the imperial primacy of the technical over the cultural posited already in the classical syntheses of modernism" (1995: 76). In his opinion, this prioritization of the technical over the cultural will give rise to a truncated version of knowledge, hamper scientific spirit, and dictate the terms in which the youth are to be educated and modernized.

Hence, the task before an English teacher is to resist the tendencies of industriality that create sterile ghettos in

academics and creative writing. This could be done through a process which Dasgupta terms as “active abdication”. As he writes, “My claim is that English, inheriting the scholarly mantle of Sanskrit, has done far too much teaching, and must learn how to abdicate. The ways of active abdication have to be negotiated by those who undertake it” (1995: 76). For Dasgupta, the teachers of English in India have a great responsibility as they are entrusted with the task of utilizing and relativizing English for creative as well as academic interests. This will not only help to reduce the gap between the “superior knowledge” in English and all the other knowledge which is not available in English, but will also slowly help in abdicating English.

Dasgupta’s position could be termed as postmodernist as it focuses on the process of ‘othering’ in the non-metropolitan discourses and attempts to explain the mechanisms of hierarchy and power. However, his position invites a critical interrogation. Dasgupta’s compartmentalization of metropolitan and non-metropolitan Englishes does not take into account the metamorphosis of the non-metropolitan Englishes in the present day global scenario. To accord the non-metropolitan Englishes with an “auxiliary status” is again to construct a hierarchy and to perpetuate their peripheral positions.

Dasgupta’s analysis does not recognize the subversive potential of these non-metropolitan Englishes that carnivalize the dominant center. Their “otherness” acquires the status of a dialogical counterpart and not merely a subsidiary and hierarchically inferior other. Further, in his preoccupation with the notion of “otherness”, Dasgupta discards the prevalence of a dialogue between what he terms as the “English-self” and the “other-English” speaking communities. There is a dialogic confrontation, a cultural encounter between the two, which gives rise to a mutual “give and take”. For these reasons, his understanding could be termed as a finalized enquiry providing us with a singular perspective.

What becomes important is not just “otherness” but the “outsideness” of that otherness. As Bakhtin writes, “In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be located outside the object of his or her creative understanding – in time, in space, in culture” (1994b 7). Bakhtinian outsideness helps us to construct a bridge between the self and the other and makes possible a creative understanding of the otherness.

Dasgupta’s formulation is problematic for a few more reasons. Firstly, let us examine his views from a literary standpoint. It is not possible to discard “Indian Creative Writing in English” as a “culturally sterile” ghetto, because the creative potential in this area has demonstrated path-breaking output in the recent times. If it were as sterile as Dasgupta envisions it, then the whole of the so-called postcolonial literatures would be merely lifeless writing. What Dasgupta fails to explain is how Indian Writing in English is not an “instrumental use” of English? Why should we group political, philosophical and scientific discourse as “instrumental use” and discard creative writing as belonging to a sterile ghetto?

Secondly, from a sociological perspective there are some grey areas in Dasgupta’s analysis. Resisting industriality directly implies resisting urbanization which in turn would mean restricting the spread of metropolitan culture. In a globalized scenario this is impossible; because the present-day world is a world where resisting and restricting what is freely floating and easily available is a futile exercise. Any society which embarks upon restricting its international trade and confining and demarcating its knowledge transactions will soon find itself in a pathetically dangerous development condition. Again, in the globalized world the technical and the cultural cannot be viewed as an opposition. Globalization is certainly the opening up of the economic and the cultural gates for new innovations through mutual collaboration. Therefore to understand the situation as a lopsided one where the technical takes primacy over the cultural is a formulation that comes out of a redundant anxiety.

Dialogization in Indian Writing in English

Indian English cannot be viewed as a single language with a hegemonic and dominating thrust. Rather, in the Bakhtinian sense, it is a "tension-filled environment" of contradictions, contestations and assimilations. It is a dialogically agitated condition of heteroglossic forces that resist homogenisation. It is the arena for the operation of "a dialogue of languages". In Bakhtin's words,

A dialogue of languages is a dialogue of social forces perceived not only in their static co-existence, but also as a dialogue of different times, epochs and days, a dialogue that is forever dying, living, being born, co-existence and becoming are here fused into an indissoluble concrete unity that is contradictory, multi-speeched and heterogeneous (1994a: 365).

Indian English, being a conglomerate of subvarieties such as 'Hinglish', 'Tinglish', and 'Kinglish' - at a regional/cultural level, and 'Babu English', 'Butler English', and 'Educated English' - at a socio-economic level, demonstrates the Bakhtinian condition of "a dialogue of languages". English in India is the contested space of friction and struggle among the varied native markers. It is also the contact zone of mutual exchange and an arena for cultural identities to overlap and become hybrid identities. Paroo Nihalani et al. in the introduction to their book entitled *Indian and British English* (1977) attempt to identify the origins of the "idiosyncrasies" of Indian English. In their view, peculiarities of Indian usages could be attributed to three different sources, namely, older usage of British English which have now disappeared from native English but has been retained in Indian English, the influence of Indian mother tongues and the influence of US English. However, they are aware that these are but some sources among many which are always instrumental in altering the operative dynamics of Indian English. As they rightly point out:

The main point is that not only are all languages continuously changing – all varieties of a particular language are continuously changing too. In some areas of the language one variety may be more conservative than another: in other words, the same variety may show greater innovative power (1987: 6).

For them, Indian English has demonstrated an innovative expansion to represent the messy "Indian reality". It has widened its potential by embarking on creating new English forms.

Let us examine two examples, one from prose and the other from poetry. In Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, we come across the following conversation in the train:

"What honourable noun does your honour bear?"

"My name is Iqbal."

"May your Iqbal (fame) ever increase."

The man had obviously taken him to be a Muslim. Just as well. All the passengers appeared to be Muslims on their way to Pakistan.

"Where does your wealth reside, Babu Sahib?"

My poor home is in Jhelum district."

Iqbal had answered without irritation.

The answer confirmed the likelihood of his being Muslim: Jhelum was in Pakistan (qtd in Mehrotra: 1998 21-22).

A similar example could be seen in R. Parthasarathy's poem "What is Your Good Name, Please?"

What is your good name, please?

I am remembering we used to be neighbours

in Hindu Colony ten fifteen years before.

Never mind. What you do now?

You are in service, isn't it?

I am Matric fail. Self-employed.

Only last year I celebrated my marriage.

It was inter-caste. Now I am not able

to make the two ends meet (qtd. in Mehrotra: 1998 25).

The juxtaposition of the two examples throws light on certain key aspects. It is noticeable that both the examples are about the initial greetings Indians share when they meet their countrymen. The extreme politeness is noticeable in phrases like "What honourable noun does your honour bear?" "my poor home" and "your good name, please?" The tautological and inquisitive questions, apart from exemplifying the attitudes of Indians, also throw light on their cultural identities. The two examples show different native markers. While in the example from Khushwant Singh, the influence of Urdu and Hindustani is noticeable, Parthasarathy's poem demonstrates the Dravidian traces on Indian English.⁵

There is a subtle inner-dialogism and double-voicedness in the utterances. For example, in the utterance "What honourable noun does your honour bear?" We can observe an Indianism ("honourable noun" for name) and a native expression ("your honour") used together to convey a sense of deep respect for the educated Indian. Thus, there is a tension, an inner-dialogism in the utterance. The line "Now I am not able/to make the two ends meet" from Parthasarathy's poem is double-voiced. The idiom "make the two ends meet" means to be financially capable to manage the problems at hand. The persona retains this meaning, and at the same time, adds a new dimension. The fact that his marriage was inter-caste throws new light on the expression "two-ends" which is also used to refer to the two ends represented by the husband and the wife and probably the two different castes. Thus, we can ascertain the presence of two semantic intentions, the meaning as the native speakers use it with its material connotation, and an Indian dimension that adds socio-cultural connotations of conjugal and caste relations.

The presence of these extra-linguistic features in Indian English draws our attention to what Bakhtin terms as "images of languages":

The dialogic contrast of *languages* (but not of meanings within the limits of a single language) delineates the boundaries of languages, creates a feeling for these boundaries, compels one to physically sense the plastic form of different languages (1994a: 364).

The example discussed above exhibits the presence of images of languages in Indian English that constantly operate to expand their outer boundaries. The socio-linguistic and postmodernist/postcolonialist approaches have not paid

sufficient attention to the operation of such plasticity in Indian English.⁶ This plasticity does not arise out of a dialectical opposition between the native experience and an alien language. Rather, it depends on a dialogical confrontation between ethno-deviant languages and culturally specific meanings.

Such plasticity is responsible for the prevalence of the Bakhtinian condition of a "dialogized heteroglossia", that is, regarding "one language (and the verbal world corresponding to it) through the eyes of another language" (Bakhtin: 1994a, 296). This is a condition where languages engage themselves into a dialogue and demolish any conception of superiority. As G.S. Morson and Caryl Emerson describe,

When this happens, the value-systems and world-views in these languages come to interact; they "interanimate" each other as they enter into dialogue. To the extent that this happens, it becomes more difficult to take for granted the value system of a given language (2001 142).

The dialogue of languages within Indian English allows for a mutual exchange of world-views. Due to the prevalence of "outsideness", that is, each language dialogically reciprocates the other language because it is located outside the other language, the languages become more self-conscious and start acquiring higher levels of dialogicity.

The images they carry grow in strength and vitality and transform themselves into what Bakhtin calls "speech genres". By "speech genres" Bakhtin means, the "relatively stable types" of utterances used by speakers that reflect "the specific conditions and goals" of linguistic areas (1994b: 60). In Bakhtin view, to command a language would always imply a mastery over its speech genres. Speech genres, for Bakhtin, are not merely linguistic categories, but are "congealed events" of life and behaviors of speech communities who speak them. Each speech genre is different from the other not in kind but in degrees of crystallization.

Indian English exhibits various speech genres with unformalizable cognitive content that are acquired through indigenous and alien value systems. However, they are not the same as Kachru's "cline of Englishes", since the concept of a "cline" as illustrated by Kachru seems to involve socio-cultural hierarchies of a synchronic kind. As a result, the processes of mutual absorption and relative stabilization of the different utterances within the temporally evolving domain of Indian English do not get sufficient attention in Kachru's approach. As speech genres are always in the state of a slow temporal transition, they help us to capture the flux and changes in the social life of its speakers. To understand the subvarieties of Indian English as speech genres is certainly a step ahead of Kachru's categorization, because generic analysis will be able to explain the differentiations that grow from a particular sphere of linguistic and social activity that later develop and become more complex processes.

Is it possible to identify speech genres in Indian English? Within the literary domain of Indian Writing in English, it is possible to identify the prevalence of such speech genres. The following example from Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) shows a blend of Indian metaphysical spirit and spiritual quest in a Western locale. The description and conversation between Ramaswamy and Savithri is punctuated by several Indian collocations that create an extra-mundane world. At the same time, we can observe that Rao's language is also indebted to the British usages:

As we wandered down the streets, Piccadilly with its many colored lights, the Tube entrances and the bus queues gave us a sense of reality. Finally I took her to some women's hostel off Gower Street-where she always had rooms reserved for her and where she was looked after by her friend Gauri from Hyderabad, round as Savithri herself, but loquacious, big and protective. I was always so afraid of Savithri getting lost. It was not only a matter of bringing back her

glasses or pen, but one always felt one had to bring Savithri back to Savithri.

"Ah, I am very real," she protested. "And tomorrow you will see how clever I am at taking buses. I'll jump into a 14 at Tottenham Court Road and be in Kensington at ten precise," she promised as I left her. I knew that at ten she would still be talking away to Gauri about some blouse pattern or somebody's marriage in Delhi. I knew I would have to telephone and ask her if she knew the time. "I promise you, you need not telephone. Tomorrow I will be punctual as Big Ben." With Savithri the profound and the banal lived so easily side by side.

I touched her hand at the door, to know I could touch her, and carried the feel of it home. It was like touching a thought, not just a thought of jug or water, or a pillow or a horse, but a thought as it leaps, as it were, in that instant where the thought lights itself, as the meteor its own tail. I felt it was of the substance of milk, of truth, of joy seen as myself.

Next day, when I was washed and dressed and had meditated and rested - I was in a muslin *dhoti* and *kurtha*-there was still no sign of Savithri at ten or at ten past ten. Not long after, she entered in a South Indian sari of a color we in Mysore call "color of the sky", with a peacock-gold *choli*, and a large *kumkum* on her forehead. She looked awed with herself, and full of reverence. As I went to touch her I refrained - something in her walk was strange (1960: 209-10).

Rao's language reverberates with sublime and transcendental echoes. The transcendental fervour and the incorporeal dimensions that could be noticed in his English constitute a speech genre in itself. His English presents a synthesis of spiritual fermentation in a cosmic realm with an aesthetic expression of human sufferings. In his language, we can observe a space for the other without completely merging the other's unique characteristics in the domain of the self. As R. Parthasarathy writes:

When a non-native English writer, such as Rao, chooses this specific genre rather than one that is traditional to his own culture, the epic, for instance, and further chooses to project this genre in a second language, he takes upon himself the burden of synthesizing the projections of both cultures. Out of these circumstances, Rao has forged what I consider a truly exemplary style in South Asian English, in fact in World English, literature. He has, above all, tried to show how the spirit of one culture can be possessed by, and communicated in, another language (1998 9).

Another interesting example from Indian Writing in English is the language used in the novel *English August: An Indian Story* (1988) by Upamanyu Chatterjee. The English used in the novel is a mixture of Indian slang and English abusive words carefully juxtaposed to highlight the kind of cross-fertilization seen in Indian English. The novel throws light on the educated Indians' informal use of English – a speech genre which is self-reflexive, witty and critical. The Indian Agastya Sen is transformed into English August by the compulsions of modern bureaucracy and political adversities. To quote an instance from the novel that demonstrates the self-critical use of Indian English:

Dhrubo exhaled richly out of the window, and said, 'I've a feeling, August, you're going to get hazaar fucked in Madna'. Agastya had just joined the Indian Administrative Service and was going for a year's training in district administration to a small town called Madna.

'Amazing mix, the English we speak. Hazaar fucked. Urdu and American', Agastya laughed, 'a thousand fucked, really fucked. I'm sure nowhere else could language be mixed *and* spoken with such ease.' The slurred sounds of the comfortable tiredness of intoxication, 'You look hazaar fucked, Marmaduke dear.' "Yes Dorothea, I'm afraid I do feel hazaar fucked" – see, doesn't work. And our accents are Indian, but we prefer August to Agastya. When I say our accents, I, of course, exclude yours, which is unique in its fucked mongrelness – you even say "Have a nice day" to those horny

women at your telephones when you pass by with your briefcase, and when you agree with your horrendous boss, which is all the time, you say “yeah, great” and “uh-uh”

‘Don’t talk shit,’ Dhruvo said and then added in Bengali, ‘You’re hurt about your mother tongue’, and started laughing, an exhilarated volley (1998: 1-2).

The liberty enjoyed by the Indian speakers of English is brought out in the passage above. The flexibility to intermingle accents, words and their semantic signification is exhibited and at the same time criticized. The example above is interesting as it celebrates this flexibility and laments the lack of a formal structure in the Indian usage. The example also brings out the Indian English morphology which is very creative imbued with Hindi morphemes. Thus, it demonstrates the prevalence of a separate language stratification or speech genre in the Bakhtinian sense.

Salman Rushdie, on the other hand, in his writings, provides us with a genre of Indian English, which apart from maintaining a uniqueness of its own, also caricatures the Indian usage. An undercurrent of mockery runs through Rushdie’s English which destabilizes the fixities of grammar and pronunciation. Rushdie speaks through a forked tongue, a hybrid language imbued with carnivalesque humour. The linguistic virtuosity of Rushdie could be ascertained from the following example. In *The Moor’s Last Sigh* (1996), a drunk Vasco Miranda, addressing a few people on the night of India’s independence says:

‘What are you all so pleased about?’ he shouted, swaying. ‘This isn’t your night. Bleddy Macaulay’s minutemen! Don’t you get it? Bunch of English-medium misfits, the lot of you. Minority group members. Square-peg freaks. *You don’t belong here*. Country’s as alien to you as if you were what’s-the-world *lunatics*. *Moon-men*. You read the wrong books, get on the wrong side in every argument, think the wrong thoughts. Even your bleddy dreams grow from foreign roots.’

‘Circular sexualist India my foot. No. Bleddy tongue twister came out wrong. Secular-socialist. That’s it. Bleddy *bunk*. Panditji sold you that stuff like a cheap watch salesman and you all bought one and now you wonder why it doesn’t work (Rushdie 165-66).

Thus, what presents itself as Indian English may be viewed as an arena for a “spectral dispersion” (Bakhtin: 1984 187) of meanings that disseminate values and practices of one culture to another. Indian English is susceptible to the effects of centripetal and centrifugal forces of language/culture that create a dialogic flux. It is a non-monologic language condition that is densely crowded with the intentions of various cultural practices both within and without.

Notes

- 1 See Griffiths’ article “The Myth of Authenticity” (1994: 21-45) where Griffiths argues how “appropriation” of the English language in the once colonised countries has helped in a mutual assimilation.
- See Govt. of India’s “Three Language formula” (1984: 12-22).
- For a survey of the influences on Indian English see Rajaram Mehrortra’s *Indian English: Text and Interpretations* [1998]
- See Dasgupta (2005: 42-56) where Dasgupta draws our attention to translation in the Indian situation and the cognitive revolution. This becomes relevant in the context of Indian English because the act of cognising meaning in Indian English is in effect a translation of the native markers.

- See online article by Baldridge titled “Linguistic and Social Characteristics of Indian English” <http://www.languageinindia.com/junjul2002/baldrigeindianenglish.html>
- See online article by Das (2005) titled “English as She Spoke” <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=5675> where Das demonstrates the prevalence of Hinglish, Inglish etc with interesting instances. This article brings out the plasticity in the Indian usage.

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